

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

NEGOTIATION GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

You've interviewed for the position and been offered the job. Whew! That was the easy part. The recruiter has made you an offer, and now it's time to negotiate your salary. For some, this can feel like a daunting and overwhelming process. But it doesn't have to be. Research shows that 8 out of 10 recruiters are willing to negotiate with job applicants, but only a few feel comfortable enough to have the conversation. Here are some quick tips to help you along the process.

Please note: these tips are applicable whether you have been offered a new position or are trying to negotiate a higher salary for your current position.

The three steps to successfully negotiate that will be covered are:

- Preparation
- During the negotiation
- You have the offer, now what?

BONUS: How to negotiate during uncertain times!

80%
of recruiters
are willing
to negotiate

PREPARATION

1 | PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL VALUE RESEARCH

Before initiating a negotiation conversation, conduct research to gain a strong understanding of your personal professional value. Some factors that can impact your professional value include:

- Years of industry experience
- Years of leadership experience
- Level of education
- Level of seniority
- Skills
- Licenses and certifications

Here are some tools you can use to conduct salary research and help you decide your salary preference:

- [Indeed Salary Calculator](#): This tool generates a pay range based on your location, industry, and experience.
- [Payscale.com](#): Research and compare average salaries
- [Other](#): Glassdoor.com; LinkedIn, and other user-generated feeds, such as Reddit, can provide organization-specific salary information. Keep in mind that the user-generated nature of some of this information does not guarantee accuracy.

Note: Besides your desired salary, consider other benefits, such as work from home and a flexible schedule. These could also be part of any negotiation discussions.

2 | ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH

If you know people who work for the company, talk with them about the position to see if they can give you any insight about the salary structure. Some industries (ie, higher education) disclose their employee salaries annually.

3 | PRACTICE AND REHEARSE

The adage “practice makes perfect” is especially important when entering negotiations. Similarly to making a presentation, make sure you are prepared and rehearsed. It also helps to role-play with others, especially if you feel uncomfortable with these discussions.

DURING THE NEGOTIATION



Important! Before you begin any negotiation, determine whether or not you are really interested in the job. If you aren't interested in the job or are only mildly interested in the job, don't waste time negotiating. Don't waste people's time.

1 | REQUEST A PHONE CALL WITH THE COMPANY OR RECRUITER TO DISCUSS THE OFFER

After you have received an offer and decided to negotiate, consider having the conversation over the phone instead of through email, where your tone or intention could be misinterpreted.

2 | LEAD WITH GRATITUDE

As a best practice, express your excitement about the role and gratitude for the offer before discussing your requests. You might begin the conversation with, “Thank you and xxx company for the offer. I want to express my continued interest in this opportunity. I am thrilled by the prospect of joining your team.”

3 | EMPHASIZE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

Although you already did this during the interview process, it is even more important to reiterate your accomplishments, skills, and experience during the negotiation process. Doing so reminds the recruiter of your value to this specific role. You might also provide examples of how your qualifications can help you make an immediate impact at the company.

4 | PRESENT YOUR PROPOSAL

Consider offering a salary range, with your desired salary at the low end. It can be helpful to identify your non-negotiables ahead of time. For example, what is the lowest salary you will accept if the organization cannot meet your requirements?

5 | MENTION OTHER OFFERS ON THE TABLE

Carefully mention other factors that affect your decision, such as additional job offers or late-stage interviews with other companies. For example, you could say, “This role with xxx is my first choice; however, I have received a competing offer, and I'm also wrapping up interviews with another company...”

6 | CONSIDER NEGOTIABLES BEYOND SALARY

If the company cannot give you a higher salary (or even if they are willing to increase it), consider negotiating additional benefits, such as a flexible schedule, remote work option, paid time off, and a signing bonus.

7 | YOU MAY NOT GET AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

Whether you are speaking with a recruiter or decision-maker, they may need time to consider your requests. Be patient and understanding, but you can also ask when you should expect to hear back from them.

POST OFFER: YOU HAVE AN OFFER, NOW WHAT?

1 | DON'T IMMEDIATELY AGREE TO THE OFFER

Although you should not immediately agree to the offer, don't prolong a response for too long. Reach out to the recruiter to see if there is a timeframe for when you need to get back to them. Often, recruiters will give you time to decide whether or not you accept the offer. But it's still always good to be proactive and ask.



2 | GET THE OFFER IN WRITING

Oftentimes, employers will provide a formal offer in writing. Ensure you have it for your records if something comes into dispute later. It's just a way to cover yourself.



BONUS: NEGOTIATING DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

In times of economic uncertainty, it's common to see announcements of hiring freezes, budget cuts, restructuring, or layoffs. These developments can make people hesitant to bring up salary negotiations, fearing it might seem out of touch or poorly timed. However, experts suggest, and data support, that employees and job candidates could have more leverage than they think. Below are several strategies to consider when negotiating job offers during uncertain times.

If you're seeking a raise in your current role, framing the conversation strategically is important. Focus on your value — highlight recent successes, measurable outcomes, and ongoing commitment to the organization's mission. Be prepared to provide real examples from your recent work. This can be particularly persuasive for those in essential or high-demand roles, even in a challenging climate.

If your organization is experiencing budget constraints or hiring freezes, you can still open the door to future conversations. Even if a raise isn't immediately feasible, expressing your interest in equitable compensation now and backing it up with a strong track record of good performance can set you up for success when conditions improve.

If you're interviewing for a new job during uncertain times, research how external factors have impacted the potential industry and employer. Look for recent updates on the company's website, news outlets, or social media, and consider reaching out to trusted contacts in your network who may have insights.

During interviews, thoughtful questions can help you better understand the organization's current state. For example, consider asking::

- How has the current economic environment impacted the company?
- What challenges has the company faced recently, and how are they addressing them?
- What are the company's top priorities as it navigates this period?
- How have current challenges affected internal mobility, promotions, or professional development opportunities?
- How is the organization planning for future stability and growth?

These questions demonstrate your interest in the company's direction and offer valuable context as you evaluate and negotiate an offer.

SOURCES

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- Book: The Mind and Heart of the Negotiator by Leigh L. Thompson
- Book: Getting to Yes by Roger Fisher and William Ury